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CRITICAL NOTICES.

Dr. Harkavy on Saadyah Gaon.

Leben und Werke des Saadjah Gaon (Said al-Fajjumi, 892-942), Rectors der Talmudischen Akademie in Sora, Heft I. (St. Petersburg, 1891, in Hebrew).

IN honour of the approaching millenary of the birth of the famous Saadyah Gaon (for it is believed that he was born in the year 892), M. J. Derenbourg, member of the Institute of France (with the assistance of younger scholars) and Dr. Harkavy have undertaken to publish the accessible works of Saadyah which have not yet been critically edited. The first installation of this work lies now before us, and we shall give a brief description of it. Dr. Harkavy's book forms a fifth part of his learned *Studien und Mittheilungen aus der kais. öffentlichen Bibliothek zu St. Petersburg* (most of his documents being found in this library), of which the first appeared in 1879. The present part is dedicated to M. J. Derenbourg on the eightieth anniversary of his birthday in the month of Ab of last year. Thus Dr. Harkavy's important contribution to the Saadyah literature comes a little *post festum* as regards M. Derenbourg, and a little too early for Saadyah's millenary; nevertheless, we welcome it with applause, and we congratulate our learned friend on his important discoveries which we find in this first part of the work.

A grammatical work by Saadyah written in Hebrew is mentioned by Abraham ben Ezra under the title of אגרון, pronounced by late writers as Iggaron; but the true pointing in early MSS. is *Agron*, with Pathah or Segol. The important discovery of the fragments of the *Agron*, as well as of the *Sepher hay-Galuy* (of which we shall speak later on), is due to the late Karaite scholar, M. Firkowitz, and was made known before 1867. These remains are now in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg in the second collection of the Firkowitz MSS., and from them Dr. Harkavy has made the present scholarly edition. Unfortunately only two large fragments of the Arabic and Hebrew prefaces are to be found there, but Dr. Harkavy has been lucky in discovering other fragments in quotations by early writers, as will be mentioned presently. The Arabic preface is accompanied by a Hebrew translation by Dr. Harkavy, and both pre-

faces are provided with ample notes, critical as well as linguistic. The texts are prefaced by the learned editor with the following chapters:—1. An extensive bibliography of articles and notes on this book from the earliest date to the present time. We may say, without exaggeration, that scarcely an item is here missing, for even mention is made of the remarks of modern scholars who have doubted the genuineness of our document. It was only natural that Firkowitz's discoveries should have been received with caution after the proof of the evident falsifications in the epitaphs of Tschufut Kale, and in colophons of Biblical MSS. Perhaps Dr. Harkavy is a little too severe upon Dr. Steinschneider, who with the exacting accuracy of a bibliographer was naturally more inclined to doubt, and more difficult to be persuaded, than other modern critics.

2. This chapter is followed by a record in which a description of the *Agron* is given, the date of composition, the contents, the titles, the quotations found in it, and the mention of it by early writers. Saadyah says that he composed the treatise at the age of twenty (912 C.E.).

The various chapters of the *Agron*, "the collector," had each its own title; one of these was perhaps "The Book of the Foundation of the Song," an Arabic title mentioned in the extract from R. Mebasser (see last line but three of this page), because the object of Saadyah was to instruct his brethren in pure Hebrew, and not in that of the early liturgists, whom he mentions (שיר, "song," must not be taken here in the sense of metrical compositions, for Dunash states expressly that Saadyah did not write metrical lines). Dr. Harkavy takes the last-mentioned title as the Arabic title of the *Agron*; further discoveries may settle this question. Saadyah mentions in the *Agron* five liturgists who lived some time before him. These are:—(1) The famous Yosé ben Yosé, the author of the *Abodah* beginning with the words, אֲזַכִּיר גְּבוּרוֹת אֱלֹהֵי נֶאֱדָר; (2) his pupil Yanai; (3) the well known Eleazar Kalir; (4) Joshua; and (5) Phinehas. To them Dr. Harkavy devotes a first appendix, in which we find that Kalir came originally, according to Dr. Harkavy, from Palestine, just as his master Yanai, whose liturgies were popular and already accepted in the Babylonian schools at the time of Anan, the founder of the Karaite sect (about 760 C.E.). As to the two other liturgists which follow Kalir, viz., Joshua and Phinehas, Dr. Harkavy's discussion led to no definite result. Uncertain, also, it remains who the liturgist Nahrawani is, whom R. Mebasser ha-Levi mentions in his polemical work against Saadyah, and in which he mentions the *Agron* with the title of "Book of Song." Of this treatise only fragments exist, and Dr. Harkavy has given those concerning Saadyah's grammatical work as far as they are accessible.

The second appendix treats exhaustively of the use of the word

אגרון (from which the title אגרון is derived) by Jewish writers from the Talmud to the last century. Perhaps the expression אגרונייה used in the Yemen grammars, Hebrew and Arabic (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IV., p. 310) is derived from Saadyah, and may be found in the *Agron*, of which we possess only fragments.

The third appendix gives an interesting enumeration of the mnemonical words which grammarians from Saadyah to our century (twenty-nine in number) employ for indicating the radical and servile letters.

We come now to a second treatise of Saadyah, viz., the ספר הגלוי (Jeremiah xxxii. 14, "the open book"), which underwent, like the *Agron*, two revisions, the one in Hebrew, divided into verses, provided with vowel-points and accents, and of which only a few lines are extant (p. 181), and the other in Arabic, divided into seven parts, of which only the fragments exist now, ably edited with a Hebrew translation and ample critical notes. It is to be regretted that the historical part is entirely missing, and that others are only fragmentary. Let us hope that they may yet be found in Eastern *Genizas*. The introduction to the texts, like that to the *Agron*, gives first the bibliography, and then considers the title, contents, and division of the treatise. Dr. Harkavy disputes the translation of גלוי by "Open"; he makes it the book of the "exiled," saying that Saadyah wrote it when deposed from his Patriarchate at Sora (after 931), and relying on Saadyah's Arabic rendering, which has כתאב אלכאדר. The word כאדר, however, does not mean "exiled," but "one who exiles;" possibly the original MS. had the reading אלכאדר "the visible, i.e., the open book, visible for everyone," corresponding to גלוי. So also the Targum פתחא שטריא, and the Qamhis take it in the same sense. The anonymous Arabic translator in the MS. Oxford, No. 181, renders גלוי (Jer. xxxii. 14) by אלמנשור, divulged. The parallelism of the following words מכון and מכון confirms the reading of כאדר for כאדר. In an extract from R. Mebasser's discussion we find another Arabic title of the *Galuy*, viz., כתאב אלאעתבאר, which Dr. Harkavy renders by "Book of reflection or consideration" (if we understand rightly his rendering ההתבוננות), adding in the note that R. Mebasser did not like to mention the title of גלוי for כאדר as casting blame upon the adversaries of Saadyah, who caused his exile. This seems, however, to us far fetched, and is unnecessary if our suggestion about the word כאדר is accepted. Perhaps a part of the *Galuy* which treated of instruction from similitudes and proverbs was headed כתאב אלאעתבאר, which means instruction by proverbs. Since we know that the *Agron* was divided into chapters, headed כתאב, the same may have been the case with the *Galuy*. It is

possible, therefore, that Ibn al-Nadim had heard of this title, and from memory turned it into כְּתָאב אֱלֵמֶתָאֵל, "Book of Proverbs," and here Dr. Harkavy has the happy conjecture that this book is meant by Nadim, and not Saadyah's *Commentary on Proverbs*, which has another title. Indeed the ten parts which Nadim mentions for the division of the Book of Proverbs agrees well with the *Galuy*, which, according to Dr. Harkavy, had in the second composition ten parts.

After the extracts from R. Mebasser concerning the *Galuy*, follows another, which seems to Dr. Harkavy to be from Saadyah's *Commentary* on a part of the seventh division of the *Galuy*. This is followed by a passage found in a MS. at St. Petersburg relating to the composition of the Mishnah, which is the subject of the second part of the *Galuy*. Next come quotations by Dunash and Abraham ibn Ezra from the *Galuy*, others by Abraham ben David and Abraham ben Hiyya being mentioned in a previous chapter. Another mention of the *Galuy* by a contemporary, and perhaps a pupil of Saadyah, lately found in a fragment of a MS. in the Bodleian Library, will be given by Dr. Harkavy in one of the next parts of his book (according to the outside page, there are two more parts to come).

We have now to say a word about the appendices to this part, which are not less important than those to the *Agron*. They are the following:—1. On the authorities mentioned in the *Galuy*, viz. (a) Jesus ben Sirach and Eleazar ben Irai, author of a book of Wisdom (see JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, IV., p. 162); (b) The Book of the Hasmoneans in Aramaic (the Megillath Antiokhos), the book of the men of Kairowan or Africa, and some minor quotations. Of course we cannot give here any summary of Dr. Harkavy's opinions on the Apocrypha mentioned. His book ought to be carefully read in order to find out all the new matter which he lays before us. The second and third appendices are historically important, although not very refreshing in language and contents. They contain documents wherein one chief of a school attacks another. The chief *dramatis personæ* are, of course, Saadyah, the Nasi David ben Zakkai, an unknown Ben Meir, Ahron Sarjado, and others. The document concerning Ben Meir, who wanted to restore the Palestinian patriarchate for his own benefit, has only been recently discovered, as well as a few lines which Dr. Harkavy considers—most likely with justice—as belonging to Saadyah's Book on the Feast Days, or a treatise on the Calendar, which he mentions in the *Galuy*. The second contains a fragment of Sarjado's attacks upon Saadyah, and of the excommunication of the Patriarch David ben Zakkai, re-edited from the MS. which Firkowitz had, not very successfully, reproduced in photography. Dr. Harkavy was able to read many words which could not be deciphered in the photo-

graph. It is most likely, as Dr. Harkavy suggests, that the document was written by the Karaite Sahl ben Matzliah, who may have added some invective matter of his own, for we know that Saadyah was a thorn in the side of the Karaites. However, Saadyah himself mentions most of them in the *Galuy*. In this last document we find numerous names of friends and enemies of Saadyah, hitherto unknown. Other names will follow in the part of Dr. Harkavy's work which will give the biography and the bibliography of Saadyah.

We may hope that in the meantime some documents concerning Saadyah will be discovered amongst the fragments in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg and in other libraries. One thing is certain—that the biography of Saadyah will have to be rewritten, as well as the notices of the contents of his numerous works. The part of the fifth volume of Graetz's *History of the Jews* relating to Saadyah is already superseded, and should be used with great caution.

A. NEUBAUER.

Leimdoerfer's "Kohleth."

Das heilige Schriftwerk. Kohleth im Lichte der Geschichte. Neue Forschung über Ecclesiastes nebst Text, Uebersetzung und Kommentar von David Leimdoerfer. (C. FRITSCH, Hamburg, 1892.)

THE saying of the Rabbis that the Law can be explained in forty-nine ways is certainly more than justified in the case of Kohleth. Dr. Leimdoerfer mentions in the preface to his book that Knobel speaks of thirty-three translations and commentaries from 1609 to 1833; Graetz gives from 1836 to 1868 not less than nineteen, and Reuss from 1871 to 1890 about the same number, altogether seventy-one Christian writers, not to speak of commentaries written in Hebrew, of introductions to the Old Testament, and many essays in various periodicals. None of these numerous commentaries have satisfied Dr. Leimdoerfer, either for the explanation of the historical facts alluded to in the book, and consequently for the date of its composition and for its author, or for the exegesis; and although Dr. Leimdoerfer states that Graetz's commentary stimulated him to his present work, he follows his own way in every respect.

Let us begin with the date of Ecclesiastes. Dr. Leimdoerfer shows that the author of Kohleth speaks (a) of a king who was, and is no more, in Jerusalem, who is wiser than all before him, and this alone excludes already the authorship of Solomon, (b) of a general misrule, (c) of a despotic and warlike régime, (d) of materialism which prevails in the kingdom, (e) of fanatics in religion and believers in